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UGANDA

SUCCESS STORY

Restoring Local Government Presence in Areas of Return



Administrative offices in the sub-county of Purongo were rehabilitated with assistance from OTI.



The Purongo Sub-County administrative building was unusable before work began in August 2008.

February 2009 – Throughout Uganda's 22-year conflict, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) targeted government officials and local leadership as well as traditional and cultural leaders. The LRA's goal was to instill fear and break down the social fabric that allows communities to thrive, and its tactics included attacks not only against individuals but also on infrastructure.

With relative peace returning to northern Uganda since 2006 and the start of the peace process, local governments have begun to re-establish a presence in formerly inaccessible areas. They have also started to provide services and leadership in communities that have little experience with local government or knowledge of what its agencies should or can do.

To assist this restorative process, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is supporting efforts to rehabilitate critical infrastructure that is essential to governance and providing services in northern Uganda. Efforts are focusing on sub-county offices as well as schools and health centers.

Sub-county offices serve as meeting centers and house the administrative, judicial, and police personnel responsible for governing and providing justice and security in a jurisdiction. The presence of a functioning sub-county office not only gives citizens access to local officials but also provides the community with a sense of stability.

At a February 4, 2009, inaugural ceremony, the rehabilitated sub-county administrative office in Purongo was handed over to local officials. A district representative praised the collaborative process between OTI and local leaders, saying that government planning starts at the local level and OTI has effectively focused on the priorities of local government officials.

For Purongo, the restored facility means that the 20 government officials who work there can better serve the sub-county's 7,600 residents.

To date, OTI has supported the rehabilitation of government administration offices in three sub-counties and has also provided essential renovations to district offices.